

TOWN OF MANSFIELD
Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
September 25, 2008

Present: Smith, Gogarten (chair), Roberts, Hultgren (staff), Walton (staff)

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 p.m.

The minutes of the May 22, 2008 were approved.

Steve Rogers' e-mail about the charges for the swap shop and recycling at the transfer station was reviewed. Hultgren responded to Mr. Rogers stating the need to charge for swap shop items since they may end up in the trash if they are not taken.

After the May SWAC meeting, Walton inquired about the brands of incandescent bulbs that contain leaded bases. She was unable to get an answer from the bulb recycler or the bulb trade association. It was suggested that DEP be contacted.

Walton attended a recent Connecticut Recyclers Coalition government affairs committee meeting to prepare for the upcoming legislative session. CRC will be advocating for ways to fund DEP recycling programs. Rep. Denise Merrill may be introducing a bill that charges a fee for disposable plastic (and paper) bags as a way to fund DEP's recycling programs.

Walton reported that the EO Smith High School "Green Teens" want to start school composting. The idea being considered is composting the food waste off-site on land that EO Smith uses for its agriculture program. The group has some logistical details to work out before moving forward. Construction for the new Middle School heating system will be starting soon, which means that the school's compost bins need to be moved. A meeting is planned to discuss where the new bins should be relocated. Goodwin and Vinton Elementary schools now have their own compost bins, which they began using at the start of school. All of the custodians participated in compost training this summer.

Hultgren stated that the single-family contract will be renewed October 1, 2008 with a negotiated cost of living increase of 10%. The trash contractor, Mayo & Sons, stated that they could not do business without this increase. Because they underbid the service by 9% two years ago, Town Council approved this adjustment. This is a two year renewal.

The Festival on the Green, September 14, 2008, achieved an 87% waste reduction – the best yet. Having larger signs and environmental groups adopt a six waste station seemed to make a difference. It was suggested that a journal article be written on the progression of the Festival's low-waste efforts.

Hultgren reported on the tub grinding status. In response to an RFP, Greencycle will be doing a 5" grind for \$9,000. They also may be able to find parts for the Town's tub grinder. If so, then staff can grind the 5" pieces down further with the repaired equipment. Otherwise, for Greencycle to grind with a smaller screen will cost an additional \$2,000 - \$3,000. Several loads of large stumps have been hauled out of the solid waste area rather than being ground.

Walton stated that Jean Pillo from the CT Audubon Society is interested in offering a rain barrel sale and coordinating it with our organic land care workshops in the spring. Staff has been directed to also contact the local hardware stores about selling rain barrels.

Walton distributed a legislative report on plastic bag bans. The Town of Westport has adopted a plastic bag ban, and momentum is growing nationally. It was suggested that staff contact the Town Attorney to research the legality of banning or charging a fee for disposable bags, talk to store owners to gauge any resistance and talk to Westport officials.

Walton stated that with the growing number of people renting single-family homes, the trash collector is having some difficulty keeping track of the number of service changes. Some ideas for simplifying the PAYT system that exists include using a color-coded sticker to indicate level of service, eliminate the option of using trash bags instead of cans, and standardizing the can sizes. Staff will put together a proposal for the next meeting.

Copies of the sustainability guidelines of the strategic plan were distributed. Depending on Town Council's decision, there may be some restructuring of Town committees.

Chairperson, Maria Gogarten, stated that this would be her last meeting. She was thanked for her fifteen years of faithful service.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2008. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Virginia Walton
Recycling/Refuse Coordinator

Cc: Lon R. Hultgren, Director of Public Works, Members, file, Town Manager, Town Clerk